

THE PAPAGO AND OTHER PEOPLES

on the Reservation. The districts were created to facilitate range management, and, while in the main they coincided roughly with the areas occupied by the various dialect groups, the boundaries cut across old lines of communication and usage. Nor are these boundaries mere symbols, for they are marked by fences erected to prevent the cattle of one district from straying into another and eating up its range. Some fences cut through established ranges and kept cattle from their usual watering places. An added annoyance was that they cut across some old routes from one village to another. The fences have now stood so long that the people have adjusted to them, but the districts which they mark off have never become real entities. 631 634 657

At the time of the present study the council of Baboquivari District in the southeast consisted of ten members, with one or two representatives from each village except Topawa, which had four in accordance with its size. Supposedly these representatives were elected at village meetings every two years. The council formerly had met every month on the Friday preceding the tribal council meeting, and anyone interested might come and participate in the discussion. However, interest had apparently fallen off, for no meetings had been held recently. 634

Hickiwan and Gu Vo district councils were organized on the old pattern: every adult male was eligible to speak and to vote. However, as previously noted, Hickiwan had been so badly split that no united action was ever taken, and only one meeting was held in the two years preceding this study. Gu Vo had had no meetings at all.

At one time consideration was given to the establishment of district courts where small matters could be decided. The people of Baboquivari indicated a desire to try out such a court, but it was never set up. Here, as elsewhere on the Reservation, minor disputes which cannot be settled by the family are still taken to the old village court. [627]

THE PAPAGO AND THE LARGER WHITE WORLD

Papago who go to work off the Reservation—as they have done in increasing numbers since 1940—receive varying treatment. Where they work in large numbers, as on the ranches and at the Ajo mine, they are given a good deal of consideration, for they are known as good and steady, though slow, workers. Ranchers allow their workmen to go home occasionally and treat them according to their merits as honest and hard-working individuals. Papago who have gone out to work for several years usually return to the same employer, and quite friendly relations are often established between them. 466 ●

Contacts with employers at the mine are, of course, far less personal, but

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466 mine officials have gone to some trouble to provide satisfactory living conditions for Papago employees and their families. For them they have built neat small houses with sanitary facilities. Since they are fair with their employees, they expect good steady work in return. In an effort to combat absenteeism (particularly from drunkenness), mine officials encouraged the organization of Ajo Papago with a council and a "chief," after the fashion of their home villages. A representative was to attend, but not to vote in, the tribal council meetings. This is a particularly interesting development, since families from all parts of the Reservation now live in Ajo, and it may contribute to the growth of tribal unity.

[461] Working on a definite schedule in the white fashion is not a normal life for the Papago, but he seems to be able to adjust, perhaps because he likes the wages, which give him a higher cash income than most people can earn on the Reservation. The wages may compensate for the poor living conditions that in some cities go with jobs for Papago.

641 The general public looks upon these Indians as a lower-class group with a tendency toward drunkenness, and, though they are not subjected to as marked social discrimination as are Negroes,¹¹ they must endure a certain amount of racial prejudice.

Political discrimination is more apparent. Papago must pay the state automobile tax and income tax and, when they are off the Reservation, the state sales taxes as well. But they do not have the right to vote.¹²

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146 Since 1924 all Indians born in the United States have been citizens. As such, the Papago are subject to all federal laws and regulations. A few men pay federal income tax, but Selective Service and rationing affected all. The Papago submitted to these wartime necessities with better grace than many groups; despite the difficulties of language and transportation, surprisingly large numbers turned out to register for the draft and for rationing. Rationing was of course difficult for the Papago at first, but after they understood it there were few complaints, and they seldom forgot to bring ration books to the stores. Papago adapted themselves to wartime conditions with the ease and lack of strain which has characterized them throughout their history. One leader in the western districts instructed young men not to register for the draft, but, when he was sentenced to prison for attacking a federal officer, resistance died down. At the time of this study about 1,700 Papago were regis-

11. It is interesting to note that the Papago in turn have borrowed the prevailing white concepts about Negroes. They regard "The Black Ones" as social inferiors, comic characters who are fit subjects for clowning to imitate.

12. On July 15, 1948, the Arizona Supreme Court handed down a decision that Indians in the future would henceforth be entitled to vote.

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983 always get odd jobs, such as mowing lawns, in the cities. Almost every youth
464 in the western districts works at the Ajo mine at sometime between the ages
[465] of eighteen and thirty. Here at unskilled labor he can earn \$3.00 a day; in war-
time wages ran as high as \$7.00.

893 Papago youth in mines, in cotton fields, or on ranches work side by side with
466 other Indians or Mexicans and have little direct contact with whites. White
563 employers treat the Indians with friendliness and often make concessions to
retain good workers, but away from work the Indians live together or with
Mexicans and Chinese in the poorer quarters of the city, so that it is the lower
strata of economic life in Arizona with which they become familiar. They do
not, however, experience some of the discriminations endured by minority
groups in many parts of the country: most cafes serve Indians, and they are
not segregated at the movies and other public places.

893 Young people working off the Reservation are relatively free from family
593 influence, and, though many send part of their wages home, they still have
273 much more money to spend than they ever had before. Now and then girls on
[548] their own in the city drift into trouble and are sent home, but they seldom
become recognized prostitutes. Boys are likely to spend a good deal of their
new-found wealth on liquor; their families at home expect the boys to do
some drinking, still they worry lest the lads become involved in brawls that
will lead to the white man's jail.

883 The youth himself is terrified of the law. Instead of being reassured by the
671 supposedly impersonal and impartial character of white men's justice, he fears
what seems to him its rigid inflexibility. If he does wrong at home, his family
may lecture him or even call in the village elders to talk to him about the error
of his ways, but the youth knows that he will be judged on his own merits and
not on what is written down in a white man's book. Most important, he will
not be shut up far from his family and his desert.

883 Sometimes young people marry when they leave the Reservation to take
582 jobs. By and large, however, they go for only short periods or at most a few
years. Family ties may become tenuous, but they are seldom broken. The wage-
earner usually sends money home and expects to return to the village
some day.

GETTING READY FOR MARRIAGE

562 Papago boys and girls do not associate in unchaperoned groups, for the girls
[746] are kept under constant surveillance. In the old days a girl who went unaccom-
panied away from the house cluster was considered fair game for any man or
boy. Even today in her home village a girl never goes anywhere alone, unless

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[For the author's predictions and projections on the future of Papago migratory farm labor (employment and wage levels, recruiting and labor relations, labor camp living conditions and sanitary facilities) in view of probable technological and economic changes in regional commercial agriculture, see category 116, pp. 99-135.]

WHERE THE DESERT PEOPLE WORK

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466 When they leave their reservations to seek farm work the Desert People don't strike out blindly to hunt work. The work seeks them. Farmers or their foremen or contractors drive onto the Reserves seeking labor, and after recruiting in the scattered villages, haul the Papagos to their labor camps. About 85% of the Papago farm laborers were hauled from their homes to the camps where they stayed for the 1950 picking season. Only a small number--about 15%--travel to the labor camps in their own cars.

[493] The Desert People do not hire out to the first labor recruiter who happens along. They have definite preferences among employers, based on their experience in past years. The Papago laborers of 1950 had already worked in the cotton harvest an average of 4 years.³ About two-thirds of the Papago hands had worked before the 1950 season, and went to the particular farm where they worked because they'd been there before and were satisfied with it. About a sixth of them were introduced to the farm where they worked in 1950 by one or another of their relatives. Only about a sixth just happened to choose their location.⁴

464 Over 90% of the farmers the Desert People work for are Anglo-Americans. But a few are themselves members of minority groups--Chinese-Americans in Pima county and (Asiatic) Indian-Americans in Pinal county. These farmers are almost all large-scale operators, and they hire about twice as many Papagos proportionately as Anglo-American farmers. Although they form less than 10% of the farmers hiring Papagos, they hire over 20% of the Papago labor force.⁵

¹of 20 giving information, 17 were hauled.

²3 of 28 giving information.

³Based on the work-experience of 26 persons.

⁴Based on questioning 11 families specifically, and impressions gained in conversation with many others.

⁵Of the 52 farmers studied who hire Papagos, 47 are Anglo-Americans, 3 Indian-Americans, 2 Chinese-Americans. Of 41 Papagos working for them, 32 worked for Anglos, 4 for Indians, 5 for Chinese.

WHERE THE PICKERS LIVE

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361 The people who move into the irrigated valleys of southern Arizona to harvest the cotton crop must live somewhere while they work in the fields. Like other migrant farm laborers

"During a considerable portion of each year they live perforce in houses or shelters which are not their own homes and in localities which are not their own home communities. Their children must suffer a series of breaks in school attendance and be denied many of the community privileges which are the normal lot of other youth. These conditions are important to employers of migrant workers. Good facilities and conditions help to induce workers to accept employment while bad conditions make it difficult for employers to obtain the workers required."¹

In 1950 cotton harvest hands had essentially two choices in southern Arizona. They could live in cities or towns and ride out to the fields every morning, or they could live in labor camps on the farms and walk to the fields.

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361 A new pattern of mobility is emerging in the Arizona cotton harvest which would considerably surprise someone familiar with the region a decade ago. Many of the 20,000 or so pickers in Pima and Pinal counties lived in towns and were hauled out to the fields each day in trucks or buses in 1950. Labor contractors recruited these crews, and sent them to the best picking available each day. About two-thirds of the cotton farmers in Pima and Pinal counties paid contractors to haul pickers to their fields.² About a fifth of the farmers in Pinal county hired pickers who lived in towns, but drove their own cars to the fields instead of working under a contractor.³ Actually very few farmers relied on pickers driving to work to harvest their crop--those who did planted small acreages close to towns. Most growers hired anyone who came along in his car along with hands hauled from towns in trucks and those living in camps.

¹Federal Interagency Committee on Migrant Labor, 1947, p. 18-19.

²30 farmers of 31 giving data, 64.5%, in Pima county did.

³26 of 38, or 68.4%, in Pinal county hired such pickers.

⁴39 of 36 farmers giving data hired them--83.7%.

⁵4 of 31 farmers giving information hired them--12.9%.

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[466] Not the least of their problems is harvesting. Until such time as they completely mechanize their harvest, the housing they provide for their pickers is of vital concern to the pickers and the communities where the white gold miners operate. By comparing the actual situation in 1950 with the labor-camp code suggested by the Federal Interagency Committee on Migrant Labor in 1947, we can see how near southern Arizona farmers are to a standard likely to be considered reasonable and desirable by most Americans.¹

SITES

361 This suggested camp code to be used as a standard with which to compare southern Arizona camps reads:

362 "Article 1. Site, Selection, and Maintenance

"(a) All sites used for labor camps shall be located upon high well-drained ground. They shall not be subject to periodic flooding, or located adjacent to swamps or marshes which might have adverse effects upon the health of the occupants. Camps shall not be located on sites which are subject to extreme traffic hazards. No labor camps shall be located on the watershed of a domestic water supply.

"Where corrals or stables exist, or where large animals are maintained in connection with any camp, the quarters for any animals shall be separated from the camp.

"(b) All sites shall be adequate in size to prevent overcrowding of buildings.

"(c) All sites shall be graded, ditched, and rendered free from depressions in which water may stand...Where sand or dust create problems, provision shall be made for stabilizing the soil or maintaining satisfactory cover crops.

"(d) The grounds and open areas surrounding the shelters shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition free from rubbish, debris, waste paper, garbage, etc."²

¹The Federal Interagency Committee on Migrant Labor was headed by Maj. Gen. G. B. Erskine, USMC; and included representatives of Dept. of Agriculture, Dept. of Labor, Federal Security Agency, Interstate Commerce Commission, National Housing Agency, and Railroad Retirement Board, Federal Interagency Committee on Migrant Labor, 1947, p. 11.

²Ibid., p. 39-40.

362 At dusk when breezes are still and hundreds of
361 trucks and cars have returned from the fields to labor
camps, stirring up dirt roads, a choking dust pall rises
all over the cotton growing valleys. The picker gets
his last view of the distant mountains each night through
this low hanging dust cloud.

[312] Probably because of the permanent water shortage in
both counties, none of the cotton farmers has seen fit
to plant cover crops on his labor camp grounds. Nor
have any farmers been concerned enough over dust prob-
lems to oil either section line roads or camp grounds.

SOCIAL CONTROLS IN LABOR CAMPS

●466 Apparently the main desire of many cotton farmers
361 is to have as little to do with their labor camps as
possible. This is reflected in the generally messy
364 appearance of the uncared-for grounds in unsupervised
camps. It is a rare camp without cotton or tin cans or
paper or garbage or all four scattered about.

186 However, lack of supervision is not the only reason
361 southern Arizona labor camp grounds are generally messy
364 looking and not very hygienic. One primary reason for
dirty camps is their very nature. Their population is
temporary and transient, without any sentimental ties to
or pride in the camps. As a result, laborers simply do
not care about the appearance of camps, and do not bother
to keep them clean. It is interesting to note the ex-
ceptional labor camps in the region where workers are
employed on a year-round basis, and have time to form
some attachment to the camp. Even if these year-round
workers must live in tents, they make some attempt to
beautify the camp grounds. They try to grow a patch of
lawn, or a few straggling castor bean plants, or a rose
or some iris—and they keep the grounds around their
dwellings neat and clean. An urge to grow something
seems especially strong among the Desert People and the
Mexican-Americans.

621 Besides this factor of length of residence in labor
361 camps, there is another aspect of social organization in-
364 volved in so many camps being dirty—with operators hav-
ing a difficult time coercing residents into cleaning
them up. This is the fact there is no real social organ-
ization extending through the whole camp. The laborers
are a miscellaneous lot generally hired as they come

[Housing in Southern Arizona Labor Camps]

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to the department....Wooden floors shall be constructed of planed tongue-and-groove boards. All concrete or asphalt floors shall be of a smooth finish and properly sloped to drain. The floor of all living quarters shall be kept in good repair and if any floor is broken or has such cracks or knot holes that it cannot be kept in a dry and sanitary condition it shall be repaired or replaced by a new floor."¹

There probably isn't a wood floor in a southern Arizona labor camp made with tongue-and-groove boards, so they are nearly all sub-standard. Concrete floors in camp cabins made of concrete blocks appear to be good floors meeting any reasonable standard. But in the rest of the camp housing, floors are either sub-standard or non-existent. Many camp houses have no floors at all save the original earth of the camp site. Adobe housing, wood housing, and tents were found with wood floors in the course of this study.

In the siding-and-frame cabins which have floors, they were made of the same material as the walls, liberally supplied with large knot holes, and leaving wide cracks between boards.

• [H66] In summary, it may be said that southern Arizona's farm commodity politicians regard their farm labor as just a necessary evil in the rocky path of cotton riches. Their on the whole anti-social attitude is accurately reflected in the poor quality of the housing they provide for their harvest hands. Generally--there are exceptions for the better, of course--this housing is not well located, subject to extreme dust problems which are uncontrolled; the cabins are mostly substandard in construction, with inadequate window space and frequently too small for proper ventilation or adequate floor space, or even floors.

¹ Federal Interagency Committee on Migrant Labor, 1947, p. 49.

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In visiting labor camps in the course of this study, the writer saw Papago babies lying on the ground on a blanket in the shade of a camp cabin with flies in clusters at their eyes and nostrils while the mother went about her work. Papago women were seen cooking with flies buzzing freely around, and the daily pot of frijoles often sat on a spotless oilcloth table cover with flies swarming in through an open door to the feast.

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In fact, in the heat of late Arizona summer and early fall--the serious fly season--the doors of labor camp cabins are closed only when no one is in the cabin. Every breath of air is precious in the oppressive heat. This is true among the Desert People even when they live in excellent concrete block cabins with spacious screened windows and screen doors. They seem to hold a somewhat Steinian concept that a door is a door is a door is a door, whether wood or screen, and they prop open a screen door to let in air just as they would a wooden door.

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This all points to the big job the Indian Bureau school and medical service still must do in educating Papago mothers and children to the dangers of the ordinary housefly.

That lack of cabin screening, and Papago lack of knowledge of its necessity is really serious in the labor camps--is convincingly shown by other sanitary conditions--or their lack--in these rural slum towns.

TOILET FACILITIES

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Whatever the construction of houses in their camps, Pima and Pinal county labor camp operators provide very much the same kind of toilet facilities. In fact, they are almost unanimous in digging a pit and erecting over it the unpainted, rustic outhouse of folklore. Over 95% of the camps in the area exhibit outhouses as alike as boards sawed from the same log.¹ A few long established farmers making a life-time career of their land provided plumbing for their laborers--significant chiefly for proving that it can be done.² They had small cotton plantings and hired few pickers.

¹ Based on: 20 of 21 camps in Pinal county and 22 of 23 in Pima, or 95%.

² Basis: 1 of 21 in Pinal and 1 of 23 in Pima county, 4%.

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In Pima county the old-fashioned backhouse provided each 3.3 cabins was located about 125 feet from the faucets where laborers obtained their water, and over 265 feet from the well supplying the water (in camps built at wells) and approximately 75 feet from the unscreened cabins themselves, on the average.¹

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In Pinal county the big cotton operators provided a backhouse for every 6 cabins on the average, only about half as many proportionately as in Pima county. They built these backhouses approximately 50 feet from the faucets supplying pickers with water and about the same distance from their cabins, but over 300 feet away from the wells.²

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The only outhouses seen by this writer while visiting camps which were not of the unpainted variety of rural America several decades ago were leftovers from prisoner-of-war camps constructed during the recent world struggle. At that time harvest labor was so short that some growers built labor camps for war prisoners willing to work in their fields.

"To relieve war labor shortages and to harvest the bumper crops we needed, land armies of women, older men, and young people from nearby cities, prisoners of war, and Mexican and West Indian workers were recruited. Labor standards for prisoners are determined by the Geneva Convention and for foreign workers by international agreements between their own governments and ours. Under these agreements for foreign nationals, orderly recruiting is followed by physical examinations by competent physicians, and written contracts between individual workers and W. F. A. These contracts guarantee free transportation and housing of accepted standards, minimum wages, employment up to 75 percent of the contract period, subsistence when unemployed, regular wage payments, and now free

¹Based on outhouse-cabin ratios for 11 camps, faucet-outhouse distance in 7, well-outhouse distance in 3, and outhouse-cabin distance in 6.

²Based on 16 camps.

³Based on faucet-outhouse distances from 4 camps, well-outhouse and cabin-outhouse distances from 7 camps.

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medical care. Thus, standards for both our 'good neighbors' and for our enemies are far higher than for our own countrymen.¹

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Certainly sanitary facilities in former prisoner-of-war camps in southern Arizona are far better than any built for American workers. Outhouses built under the Geneva Convention were large and airy, with half one side tightly screened, and the buildings were built well. The difference between the outhouses they build for their own countrymen and those they built for their wartime enemies is eloquent testimony as to the labor-be-damned attitude of southern Arizona cotton farmers, and to their eager quest after the dollars brought by their white gold. This difference is also vivid evidence of the benefits harvest laborers can derive from having an official protector. American migrant workers are protected by no Geneva Convention. They need one.

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A further comment on a social attitudes of Pima and Pinal county cotton growers is that at the time, the housing they built for war prisoners was the best yet constructed in the region for field laborers--concrete block had not yet come into use, being a post-war development. Although constructed for single men, war-time barracks have been converted for family use by American harvest hands. Where they have been maintained, these barracks or similar ones from airfields when refurbished are the best labor housing constructed of wood in southern Arizona.

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The extent to which outhouses in labor camps in the region fall short of desirable standards is easily discerned by a glance at our suggested labor camp code:

"Article 4. Toilet Facilities

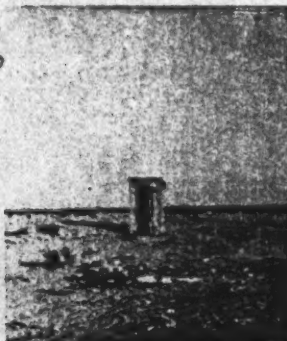
"(a) Separate toilet rooms containing water closets or privies shall be provided for each sex and shall be distinctly marked 'for men' and 'for women' by signs printed in English and in the native language of the persons occupying the camp. No person shall be allowed to use or frequent a toilet room or water closet assigned to the opposite sex.

"(b) The number of water closets or privies provided for each sex shall be based

¹U. S. Department of Labor, 1945, (no paging).

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Cotton growers build outhouses . . . like obnoxious jokes on the landscape . . .



and the Desert People take a poor example home . . . in worse materials.

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Garbage cans were hardly fly-tight . . . or emptied often enough . . .



and when they were, not in sanitary places . . . but in washes like the Santa Cruz.

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312 Only laborers living in very small labor camps had to skimp on water from trailer-tanks. There was a tank for every 5 cabins, in these camps, although tanks were sometimes ridiculously--and dangerously--small. Farmers hauling water to their labor camps in this area probably have never even thought of sterilizing their equipment.

In Pinal county a higher proportion of the camps received water directly from wells. Over 90% of them have been built near a well.¹ Nearly all of these wells, about 9 out of 10, supplied water for pipelines to faucets by the cabins. However, the number of persons using each hydrant in 1950 was apparently double that in Pima county. Hydrants outside the cabins were provided at a ratio of 1 to 7² cabins to 1 per 14 cabins, with the average 1 for each 11 cabins.³

CLEANLINESS

515 If cleanliness is next to Godliness, the Desert People living in southern Arizona labor camps are amazingly close to their Duty. But it is their own doing, and not that of the farmers operating labor camps. For the cotton growers had made almost no provision for laundering or bathing in their camps in 1950. If pickers were to be clean, they had to struggle against terrific odds of dust, sweat, scrub-boards, and wash pans. What labor camp operators should provide in the way of such facilities is set forth in the suggested labor code we are referring to:

"Article 7. Laundry, Handwashing, and Bathing Facilities."

"(a) Laundry, handwashing, and bathing facilities shall be provided in the following ratio:

- 1. wash basin for every 5 persons.
- 1 shower head for every 10 persons.
- 1 laundry tray or tub for every 40 persons.
- 1 slop sink in each building.

"(b) All bath rooms or utility buildings shall be well lighted and ventilated. Floors and ceilings shall be of smooth finish but not slippery materials and impervious to moisture, and sloped to drain...

¹Based on 13 camps on which data was obtained; 12 had wells.

²Based on 7 camps averaging 1 hydrant per 10.6 cabins.

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"(c) An adequate supply of hot and cold running water shall be provided in all labor camps for bathing and laundry purposes unless otherwise authorized...in which case facilities for heating water shall be provided.

"(e) Facilities for drying clothes shall be provided."¹

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These standards are met only on a few small cotton farms in Pima and Pinal counties where the farmers have invested in labor efficiency to the extent of installing indoor plumbing for their laborers. In these cases, the facilities for washing and bathing are considerably better than the standards of the suggested labor camp code.

However, if this suggested code were the law of Arizona, over 95% of the growers in both counties would be out of conformance. They provide no washing or bathing facilities beyond a hydrant where workers can obtain water.

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One reason Papago women do not put in a full work-week picking cotton is the amount of time they must spend in the camps washing out clothes in a galvanized tin wash-tub on an old-fashioned wash board. The clothes are hung out to dry on fences and trees in some camps, although most had clothes lines that appeared to be temporary affairs erected by workers rather than camp operators.

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Bathing in southern Arizona labor camps is a major operation. It is a matter of an enameled wash pan and a cloth, or doubling up in a wash-tub. Arizonans poke fun at migrants bathing in irrigation ditches, but a ditch full of water is the most practicable bathtub in the labor camps--the bather can get wet all over. But if the pump isn't running--and cotton isn't irrigated during picking season--there isn't even water in the ditch.

Papagos and most other cotton pickers in the region manage to keep amazingly clean, considering the difficulties they encounter. Small townspeople who turn up their noses at dirty Indians and Okies might try keeping themselves sweet-smelling under camp conditions before criticising (then they would criticise employers).

¹Federal Interagency Committee on Migrant Labor, 1947, p. 41-42.

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SAFETY

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Germs are hardly the only threats to life and well-being in southern Arizona labor camps. There are all the diseases that do not require an insect transmitter besides those carried by flies, and there is fire, which man has put to work for him but never completely mastered. The suggested labor camp code we are using to measure Arizona camps has a section covering safety provisions:

"(a) All buildings or structures of a camp in which persons are housed must conform to all applicable standards with respect to fire protection. Where no adequate standards relating to fire protection exist, the commissioner...shall, in cooperation with the appropriate officials, set up standards for the protection of the camp occupants against fire. Each structure in which six or more people congregate or sleep shall have two doors located at opposite ends of the structure. Such exits shall not be blocked.

"(b) Units of fire-extinguishment equipment shall be so located that a person will not have to travel more than 100 feet from any point to reach the nearest unit and at least 1 unit shall be provided for each 1,000 square feet of floor space.

"(d) If chemical fire-fighting equipment cannot be provided, 1 open barrel containing 51 gallons of water, with 2 fire pails attached, will be considered as constituting 1 unit of fire-extinguishment equipment."¹

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Pima and Pinal county cotton farmers gamble with human life in this respect as they frequently do by their failure to house their harvest laborers in sanitary camps. Labor camps with chemical fire-fighting equipment are so rare as to be virtually non-existent. The only 50 gallon open barrels of water for fire protection noticed in the course of this study were located at the ends of long rows of baled cotton in storage yards of cotton gins. White gold is money, but if a laborer dies

¹ Federal Interagency Committee on Migrant Labor, 1947, p. 43.

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362 in a labor camp fire the grower isn't out anything but
● 466 a picker who can be quickly replaced.

165 Fires do take an annual toll in labor camps. They destroy the young; William West, who burned to death when a gas stove exploded in a labor camp, was only 24.¹ They destroy without regard to occasion: Cecil Spikes, in his middle thirties, died in a labor camp fire on Christmas Day, 1950.²

362 To a person who has seen many southern Arizona labor camps, the wonder is that there has not yet been a camp holocaust catching pickers in bed at night and wiping out an entire camp's population. Camp operators have taken almost no precautions against such a catastrophe. Even camps with a number of water hydrants would be at the mercy of an intense fire, for hydrants are seldom equipped with hoses that would put water close enough to a blaze to be effective. Ruckets and pans are the labor camp resident's first line of fire defense--and almost his only line.

466 A definite threat to life and limb exists in labor camps in the form of unstable migrant workers, who are largely uncontrolled by any real supervisory authority. In Pima county about a third of the camps were totally unsupervised in 1950. Most of the rest were checked periodically by the farmers, and rarely camps were under supervision by a labor contractor.³ In Pinal county farmers showed much less concern about what went on in their labor camps in 1950. Less than a fifth of the camps seem to have been under direct supervision by a grower or his wife. Just about a third of the camps were left to the care of a foreman, and an equal proportion were kept under more or less control by a contractor. In a few cases the foreman was a Papago Indian in charge of other Papagos. A few labor camps were completely without supervision of any sort.⁴

[578] General lack of farmer supervision over camps, combined with lack of efficient rural law enforcement in both counties by sheriff's offices in 1950 allowed tension ridden camps far too high an incidence of violence.

¹Arizona Daily Star, Nov. 29, p. 13a.

²Casa Grande Dispatch, Dec. 28.

³Based on information from 12 camps.

⁴Based on information from 15 camps.

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A glance at newspaper files gives examples of the physical danger labor camp residents live under. George Butler, a farm worker, was knifed in the throat in a roadside tavern by another cotton picker in Pinal county.¹ Leonard Baker was shot outside the tent he shared with a common-law wife in a Pima county camp.² The mystery surrounding the death of a Papago man found on the desert in Pinal county remains unsolved at this writing.

The Eloy area is infamous for its deaths by violence in recent years of cotton field expansion. Cotton picker Alonso Davis is in the Arizona State Prison after killing a friend in a labor camp in a drunken stupor.³ Another cotton picker beat a drinking companion's brains out with a pipe to rob him.⁴ An itinerant harvester accused the postmaster of withholding his mail, and gunned him down on the street before being slain by a wounded deputy sheriff.⁵ And these are only examples.

[839] Death is not the only form of violence the non-aggressive Desert People face in labor camps. A 14 year old Papago school girl was raped by 3 men who seized her as she carried home her groceries one night in 1950.⁶

COSTS

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In spite of their great dependence on hands living in their labor camps, southern Arizona farmers don't invest much in labor efficiency in the form of good labor housing in their camps. This fact is obvious to anyone driving the highways of Pinal or Pima county. Put stating the fact in terms of dollars is very difficult, due to marked reluctance of cotton growers to discuss the amount they have invested in camp housing. This reluctance, we may guess, springs from a guilty conscience over the poor quality of the labor camps, and past experience with unfavorable publicity in city newspapers.

The meager data which could be gathered in this study indicates, though it does no more than indicate, that the average cotton farmer in the region spends some \$4,000 on his labor camp.⁷ Actually an average of labor camp costs

¹Arizona Daily Star, Nov. 6, 1950.

²Tucson Daily Citizen, April 21, 1951.

³Sloter, n.d., p. 13

⁴Ibid., p. 17.

⁵Ibid., p. 23-27.

⁶Tucson Daily Citizen, Sept. 25, 1950.

⁷Data on original investment in labor housing was obtained

[Arizona Labor Camps]

466 means little because of tremendous variation in physical
362 form of southern Arizona labor camps, which has been discussed previously.

AGE

362 A few of these temporarily inhabited rural villages run by cotton farmers on their farms have been used a long time--up to 40 years. But most of them are quite new since the great gamble on expanded cotton production is of very recent date; mainly during and after World War II. Most labor camps in Pima and Pinal counties have had little time to deteriorate.

Because construction differs so greatly, figures on age of camps have comparatively little meaning in terms of camp quality. The average in 1950 seemed to be about 5 years--6 years in Pima county where some camps in use a long time lengthened the average, and 4 years in Pinal county where the main expansion in acreage has occurred in years immediately past.

LEISURE TIME

512 For 6 days of the week, the pickers are in the fields
461 with the sun. On 5 days they quit work from about 3 p.m. to sun down, and are ready for sleep soon after eating an evening meal, although there is time for a little drinking or gambling for the men. On Saturday the evening is free after an afternoon shopping trip, and Sunday is a day of rest.

466 Cotton farmers show almost no realization that their
526 hands have any leisure time by providing recreational facilities. The only form of recreation provided in any of the camps studied by the writer was a base-ball field. These were generally simply cleared spots where ball could be played, and employees furnished their own equipment. Only about a seventh of the camps seem to have had even this elemental form of recreation.² Of necessity, much

[362] from only 8 farmers in both counties. Their investment
[466] averaged \$4,487.50 per farm, but since one farmer of the group had two camps, investment per camp averaged only \$3,988.89.

¹Based on information on 28 camps averaging 5.3 years old.

Pima county: 17 camps studied averaged 6.3 years old.

Pinal county: 11 camps studied averaged 3.8 years old.

²3 of 21 labor camps on which data was obtained.

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[466] mid September and losing 2 weeks for trips would earn about \$585 during the season. Although this is \$50 or so under the amount the same family might make picking upland cotton, the Desert People are willing to pick American-Egyptian varieties. This is a point in their favor with cotton farmers, who have a difficult time hiring enough pickers to harvest long staple plantings. It is 1 reason growers favor Indian cotton pickers--they pick whatever cotton is in front of them, American-Egyptian or upland, scattered or thick, without grumbling. They don't sneak clods or rocks into their sacks to make weight, but on the contrary pick clean, high grading fiber. These are most attractive traits to farmers harrassed by more articulate hands willing to trim profit-fat farmers by sharp practice if possible.

PAYMENT

H65 Information gathered in this study indicates there is no differences in cotton pickers' payment for any reason other than growers bidding for labor. Over most of the picking season, pickers of every size, age, and description receive a standard price for their cotton, agree on beforehand by growers. In 1950 this standard piece-work rate was \$3.00 per 100 pounds of upland cotton and \$5.00 or \$6.00 per 100 of American-Egyptian. Toward the end of the season there was some variation as growers bid for the shrinking supply of labor willing to clean up picked-over fields. Some paid \$7 per 100 for long-staple picking. Some paid \$2.25 and some \$2.50 for "snapping" upland--breaking bolls off entire from the stems. Others paid \$3.00 for picking what could be picked and snapping the rest.

There is no such uniformity in method of payment. A majority of growers pay off their hands in cash every time the picker weighs a sack of cotton, or every evening for the weight picked that day. The practice of keeping a cash box in the field to pay pickers as they weigh in is commoner in Pima than in Pinal county. Almost two-thirds

¹44 growers of 85 who gave information paid in cash: 52%. The 85 planted 28,630 acres of cotton, averaging 336.8 acres, 2.3 larger than the average of all farms studied, so they may be taken as quite representative.

465 twice as often in Pinal as in Pima county,¹ and it was used most often with non-English speaking crews—Spanish or Papago speaking pickers.

A small proportion of the growers, all large enough cotton farmers to use more than one picking crew, used some mixture of these three methods of payment.² And in Pima county one grower's cotton was being picked by a Negro family which received a share of the proceeds for the entire cultivation and harvesting of the crop.³

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466 The small incidence of share-cropping in southern Arizona contrasts strongly with the American South, and is reminiscent of South Africa, where rarely native tenants clear prickly pear from European farmers' land for building and grazing rights. There, as in Arizona, almost all farmers pay their native laborers cash. Another Arizona contrast to the old South is a lack of company stores. Groceries operated by cotton farmers on their farms are very rare, occurring on only about 2 or 3 farms out of a hundred.

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● 466 Out in the cotton field where harvesters work and are paid or credited with cotton they have picked, the man or woman at the scales is the key figure in the economic scene. The weigher pays off.

In Pima county cotton growers with smaller farms usually do this task themselves, and a high proportion of Pima county operators spend their days in the fields during picking season. In Pinal county the owner may drop by the field once in a while in his shiny Buick, but an employee or contractor mans his scales. The weigher received quite uniformly 25¢ per hundred pounds of cotton weighed in 1950.

A good majority of weighers or contractors and a few men employed to tramp down cotton in trailers took advantage of their strategic location to make some extra money off harvesters. They brought bottled sodas to the fields for sale at 10¢ a bottle. Sometimes they iced the drinks, but often didn't bother.

¹In Pinal county 11 of 51 farmers, 22%. Pima was 5 of 34 or 15%.

²5 of the 85, or 6%, 4 of 41 in Pinal and 1 of 34 in Pima county.

³1 of 34 in the county studied.

⁴Hunter, 1937, p. 389.

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466 While drinking water supplies in most of the region's labor camps were reasonably satisfactory and sanitary--if not very convenient--the story in the harvest fields had a different plot. Workers in the cotton harvest need a high water intake because the work is hard and hot. During the early part of the season, the blazing Arizona sun makes it even hotter, raising the water requirement. But in the fields is just where water is least available.

Cotton farmers or their contractors or foremen haul water to the fields for pickers to drink. But sometimes they fail to keep up with demand, and hands gripe and swear because they must work dry--and in danger from heat prostration. Fortunately for workers, these failures are comparatively rare.

Sanitary considerations are more or less forgotten in providing water for the hands in the fields. Some contractors provide barrels with spigots, but most in 1950 had acquired their containers hit or miss, and laborers got a drink by dipping from an open container. Even spigoted barrels usually sported only one drinking cup. Lack of individual drinking cups in the intense heat made ideal conditions for transmission of every contact-communicable disease.

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461 Most harvest hands either ate prepared lunches in the fields about 10 or 11 a.m. (having started work at 7 or earlier), or walked back to the labor camp for a quick snack. However, many contractors profited off their crews by operating small stores at the scales where pickers could purchase soft drinks, pastries and other prepared foods, and tobacco products. A few performed a real service for their crews--at a price--by operating mobile lunch stands serving hot coffee and sandwiches and even hamburgers. Lunch fare of pickers observed in this study was far from ideal for hard workers.

788 the surrounding countryside are beginning to make the pilgrimage there. The church was built by the Indians to house the statue which is believed by them to have appeared miraculously in the village only a few years ago. Chuwhiy Guwak (the name means Jack-rabbit Falls Down) is growing in importance as a goal for Papago pilgrims. In 1950 it attracted about a fifth of those making a pilgrimage from labor camps, probably more than 500 people.¹ Reached by desert trails, the town is not serviced by a bus. Pilgrims reached it on trucks or in cars, or in wagons or on horseback. Most Desert People who traveled to one of the fiestas by wagon in 1950 visited Chuwhiy Guwak. The town itself has no permanent water supply aside from its chanco, and affords no power supply for bright lights. Portable generators were used in 1950 to light the few temporary bars and restaurants. The merchandise stuffed booths of Magdalena were absent, and the cost of a pilgrimage was much lower.

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1400 A good many Papagos worked a trip to their homes on the reserves into their pilgrimage before they went back to picking cotton. Their disregard of what most Anglos consider unbreakable rules for good working behavior baffles and irritates their employers. Pilgrims from Pima county labor camps lost an average of 5 1/2 days from work, in effect a work week, varying from those gone a single day to families absent 3 weeks. In Pinal county, which is even more distant from the pilgrimage towns, Papagos lost more time from work. Families stayed from 2 days to a month, averaging 9 days away from their picking jobs.² This amount of time taken from cotton harvesting just before the peak of the season is reached is frequently incomprehensible to Anglo Protestant cotton growers, and is a black mark against Papago Catholic employees in their eyes.

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[435] It seems quite likely that most Papago families making a pilgrimage from a labor camp to Magdalena, Chuwhiy Guwak or San Xavier in 1950 spent most or all that they had earned picking cotton up to that time on their pilgrimage trip. The average sized family working in the cotton harvest needed \$90 for transportation, food and lodging in Magdalena for the usual 3-day sojourn, and the added cost of drinking beer and

¹ 15 of 25 individuals whose goal was obtained, 22%.

² Based on information from 8 farmers hiring Papagos.

³ Based on 12 farms where information was obtained.

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[588] Franciscan missionaries to the earlier date of their own St. Francis of Assisi). The fine old mission church at San Xavier del Bac is the goal of Papago pilgrims at that time. In 1950 about 15% of the Desert People picking cotton who left their jobs made the journey to San Xavier.

541 One secular event in the fall competes with religious celebrations for the interest of the Desert People. This is their tribal rodeo staged at Sells. About 1 of 10 Papago cotton pickers attended one of the two-day 1950 performances. Wage laborers were augmented by great numbers of stay-at-homes, who filled the 2,500-seat capacity stands both days with help of a few hundred Anglo visitors from Tucson and other southern Arizona towns.

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[158] A few laborers return to the reserves for other reasons—some women go home to their mothers when they are due to parturate, although most seem to bear their babies in labor camps without medical aid. Sometimes a quick trip home is necessary to look after animals or other property. But generally when the Desert People go to labor camps, they go to work steadily through the season. They leave only for—to them—pressing reasons.

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[988] Most farmers hiring Indians realize that religious celebrations are very pressing reasons. Obligations the Desert People feel they must fulfill at these times rise above considerations of steady work. The vow to St. Francis comes before some farmer's cotton, or the Papago's own job, and he will go to one of those three churches regardless of other duties. Farmers who realize the importance to the Papagos of their religion are much happier men at fiesta time than those who regard a job as the most important thing in the world.

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[484] However, many farmers do not understand the religious beliefs of their Papago employees sufficiently to make allowances when Indians ignore prevalent Anglo work standards. And cotton growers resent the inconvenience involved in transporting Papagos. A Marana farmer remarked "One reason I never fool with Papagos is you have to take them to Sells 3 or 4 times a year." Another who hired Papagos griped that "Indians are more

15 of 30 trips of known purpose were to San Xavier.
25 of 30 trips of known purpose were to the rodeo.

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484 reliable but they're more trouble--you have to take them to town, to the store, and you have to look after them more than the others.

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273 The Desert People working in the cotton harvest meet farmers and other laborers under very special conditions in labor camps and fields. But for a few hours in the week they come into contact with a much wider range of Anglo-American culture in trading centers where they shop. They enter into the buyer-seller relationship prevalent in our society, in stores of many kinds. They go to movies. They sit by trucks that haul them to town and watch the colorful harvest season crowds. They seek sympathetic or predatory men to buy liquor for them, since legally they cannot purchase it themselves. Then, they drink it as fast as possible so they won't loose the poor quality liquor they've been overcharged for if they're arrested. As a result they generally become staggering drunk and are arrested, contributing both cash and labor to the city governments of trading towns--and giving their tribe a black eye. Their few hours in town on Saturday afternoon make a deep impression upon the observant Desert People.

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(494) Pima county, large-city Tucson is shopping day goal for Papagos. They take a bus into the city about once a month.¹ These are the shopping trips remembered by the Desert People, for in talking about their shopping, they didn't bother to mention more frequent trips to stores in Sahuarita or Marana where the center of town is no more than a general store or two and a garage.

In Pinal county the Desert People usually shop in the trading center nearest the labor camp where they live. The main shopping towns are Casa Grande, Eloy, Pinal, and Stanfield and Maricopa. The first three are towns of about 4,000 inhabitants. The others are "wide places in the road." To some extent Papagos go there, or to country stores at Friendly Corners, El Centro, etc., most of the time, looking forward to a trip to one of the towns every couple of weeks or once a month. The Indians go to one of the business centers Saturday afternoon, usually for 3 hours or more.²

¹ Individuals giving information averaged 25.2 days between shopping days in Tucson.

² Papagos giving information went to town every 7.4 days on the average.

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But those few hours are enough for the Papagos to spend about half their wages. During the war it was estimated \$40 of every \$100 they received from labor, cattle, and produce went immediately to business men operating outside the reserves.¹ With the boom in cotton, and the boom for Papago pickers, probably even more is spent off the reserves today.

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Most farmers who send a truck in to town with a load of Indians seem to have learned they have fewer problems with drunkenness if the trucks return to the labor camps before dinner. The time the Desert People spend in town now is considerably less than it was a few years ago, when the streets were filled with Papagos long after dark. Then on Monday morning farmers went to city halls in numbers to find some of their laborers and pay their "\$10 or 10 day" fines so they could go back to work.

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Drinking is still the main sin Anglo employers hold against Papago farm workers, as well as the number one social problem among the Desert People. As a farmer near Stanfield observed, "There's nothing more useless than a drunk Indian." It is the exceptional cotton farmer who can say of his Papagos they "drink less and are less trouble--the whites drink more." Most farmers would agree with a foreman who said that the Papagos in his camp "all drink, but very few get wild." Some growers control this problem by firing those of the Desert People unable to restrict their tipping to week ends in town. Cotton farmers often bail out good workers rather than lose their services for 10 days to the city. All over the irrigated valleys where Papagos work, bootlegging to Indians is an acute problem.

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So widespread is drinking among the Desert People in labor camps that it appears to be one big attraction to Papagos to leave their reserves to work. Liquor is much more easily obtained in labor camps and trading towns than on isolated reserves. Friendly or profiteering Anglos, Negroes and Mexican-Americans willing to sell a bottle to a thirsty Indian are relatively abundant around camps and towns. And enforcement of laws prohibiting liquor to Indians is especially difficult outside reserves. One isolated rural store, at

¹Program, Papago Reservation, 1944, p. 43.

RECRUITING

More Desert people can be expected to pick cotton in 1951 than ever before.

WHY

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The planters with their acres upon acres of white gold will be alert to recruit any labor available. Arizona's Indians are the only primary rural labor pool not already fully exploited, so growers may be expected to intensify their recruiting on the reservations, especially on the Papago reservations where growers know they can hire good steady workers, often experienced.

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The Desert People are much like foreign workers who are preferred for stoop labor in the Southwest for reasons outlined very well by Carey McWilliams.¹ They are non-white and willing to stoop at their field work, and they generally return to the same job year after year once they have established a satisfactory relationship with a farmer. They are isolated from the general migratory labor pool, and continue to be isolated by their annual return to their reserves, and their ethnic difference from other pickers.

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Intensified recruiting will probably result in many older people leaving the reserves for the cotton fields for the first time, or the return to the fields of those who may not have worked there recently for one or another reason. Average size of Papago families living in labor camps will increase in 1951, with more pickings per family unit.

Working conditions in the cotton fields will be about the same in 1951 as they were in 1950. There will be more inexperienced contractors and growers whose crews may suffer occasionally for lack of drinking water and other minor inconveniences, but this will not be very serious.

Informal person-to-person contacts between Papagos and prospective employers will suffice the Desert People for 1951—serve them very well in fact. So far as full employment goes, there will be no need for a formal

¹McWilliams, 1950, p. 282-287.

46 of the employers who discussed Papago picking capabilities with the writer believed the Desert People picked slower than other harvest hands. But just as many of them also believed Papagos picked cleaner cotton,¹ which makes them sought after cotton pickers. Clean picking and ability to get along well with employers also outweigh the serious handicap of drunkenness among the Desert People.

[223] Employer's experiences with drinking Indians naturally varies. But almost all reported their Indian crews were far below full strength on Monday. A Marana farmer said, [512] "If they'd quit drinking they'd be the best. But 90% of them do drink. They are never any good on Monday, pick up on Tuesday, and are working good on Wednesday."

Another remarked that Papagos start to drink Thursday night. These are extreme examples--some cotton farmers luckily hired only families which didn't drink--but a Monday lay-off from picking is general. And growers who have employed Papagos for many years are quite accustomed to bailing their Indians out of jail for \$10, or coddling men like J, who "works one week here and one in the city 'hotel'." [578] The faculty of the Desert People for not arguing or causing trouble must count very strongly with cotton farmers for them to put up with other failings of Papago harvest laborers. Whether their pro-Papago attitude would survive creation of a Papago Labor Service is extremely doubtful. For the type of cotton grower common in southern Arizona would tend to interpret a Labor Service as just the kind of trouble he tries to avoid in hiring the Desert People. The social welfare activities of a Labor Service as suggested by Dr. Thompson are exactly the sort of trouble cotton growers would avoid by not hiring the Desert People.

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462 Whether a Papago Labor Service tried to place workers or the Desert People were placed through the Arizona State Employment Service, cotton growers would look askance. They prefer pickers who deal directly with them over pickers sent out from the ASES for the simple reason they are usually better pickers. Migrants who come directly to the farms are experienced in picking cotton--whether they are Anglos or Indians, Negroes or Mexican-Americans. Farmers can depend on them to pitch right in and pick their weight. Pickers sent out from ASES offices are not always so dependable. Field offices in Pinal county help many experienced migrants find places, along with inexperienced beginners. But in Pima county a high

¹Based on 13 interviews in Pima, 11 in Pinal county.

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466 proportion of ASES recruits have not had any experience picking cotton—they are city people out of work and looking for some money. It takes them several days to learn to pick enough to make a living wage. If a grower pays hauling expenses, as he usually does, he loses money until they learn. Turnover is high. So farmers look for pickers who have harvested enough cotton to know their way to the fields.

WAGES

000 *The piece-work rate for picking cotton can be expected to go up in 1951.*

WHY

The leap in cotton acreage in Pima and Pinal counties in 1951 will mean growers must hire about 30% to 70% more hand harvesters than in 1950, even with a sharp increase in the number of machine pickers at work. In a nation on a semi-war basis, this number of field hands cannot be found under the nearest mullen leaf. At the beginning of World War II cotton plungers in southern Arizona could compete with war industries for some of 8,000,000 unemployed. By 1951 picking season the unemployed labor pool in the U. S. will have dropped below a quarter of that figure.¹

1951 cotton gamblers will have to pay high piece rates to attract enough field hands to harvest their crop unless they can pass a miracle. They are straining at it, pressuring Congress for relaxation of regulations governing the importation of Mexican citizens for field labor.² But Congress has shown little speed in acting, so little that Mexico is withdrawing its nationals already in this country. Despite thousands of Mexican workers thronging Hermosillo, capital of neighboring Sonora,³ only about 700 have entered Arizona (officially), and must be shared between cotton and produce growers.⁴ They are not numerous enough yet to hold piece rates down.

¹Figures are from HUTCHINSON, 1951, p. 125.

²San Grande Dispatch, Dec. 28, 1950.

³Arizona Daily Star, March 29, 1951.

⁴Tucson Daily Citizen, May 23, 1951.

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The adulterated code is silent on the relationship of labor camps to unsurfaced roads, stables, or poultry runs. The water supply must be approved by the State Health Director or a local health department, with each family having access to 35 gallons a day which need not be delivered to the house, only within 80 feet of it. Only 1 shower head per 20 persons must be provided. Kitchens need not be separated from living rooms. Growers didn't succeed in seriously watering down provisions for labor camp registration with health authorities, supervision and inspection, fire protection and garbage disposal.¹

Even this emasculated labor camp code scheduled to go into force before next picking season will eliminate many of the worst features found through the 1950 season. Many cotton growers realize the need for cleaning up their camps, and have joined in planning the new code, dragging their feet when cleaning up appeared to threaten their wallets too much. But some growers have joined with disgruntled urban groups to attempt to refer to a vote of the electorate for approval legislation passed by the 1951 legislature reorganizing several state departments, including a new Health, Welfare, and Correction department which would enforce the labor camp code. They have succeeded in referring the bills, which prevents them from taking effect as law until approved at the polls. So the recalcitrants apparently can put off action to improve their labor camps until after the boom-season of 1951, and slow down improvements by conscientious farmers who are willing to move, but move faster under official prodding.

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Papago Indians will benefit from improvement in camp conditions to the extent growers for whom they already work improve their labor camps. But over-all improvement will not aid the Desert People all it might. As pointed out earlier in this report, they choose their working spot not on the basis of the quality of the housing available in a farmer's labor camp, but on the basis of their personal relationship to that farmer. If he is a good man to work for, the Desert People return to his farm year after year, whether his labor housing is of the best or not--and frequently it is not. However, Papagos won't necessarily work for a farmer they like regardless of the type housing he provides. (ue

¹Arizona Daily Star, May 14, 1951.

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362 farmer who provided tents for his pickers told the writer, for example, that while he felt he could recruit an Indian crew because he had worked on one of the reserves and knew most of the people, they like better housing and wouldn't stay.

HEALTH CONDITIONS

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Papago migrant workers living in labor camps in 1951 will not be exposed to as great a threat to their health as before.

WHY

The head of the State of Arizona's postponed new Department of Health, Welfare and Correction, Dr. Clarence G. Salisbury, has been retained in his post as director of preventive medicine in the existing health department. He will undoubtedly do what he can in the regulation of labor camp health conditions. While Dr. Salisbury has retired from Ganado Mission Hospital (Navaho Reservation) he shows few signs of loss of energy. The interest and intervention of the State Department of Health to some extent during and definitely after the 1950 picking season was a new and wholesome factor in the labor camp health situation. This policy cannot help but lead to better conditions.

It is easily predictable that the State will not have sufficient inspection or preventive medical officers in the field to effectively control the situation. It simply was not appropriated enough money by the state legislature to handle the number of people that will be needed to pick the boom-year cotton crop. Nor is a special session of the legislature likely to provide more enforcement funds after the rebuff given the lawmakers in referring their reorganization bills. Obviously Papagos would be better protected if half their meager federal medical staff could be assigned to duty in

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"It is recommended, therefore, that a cooperative Papago Labor Service be established by the Tribal Council with the help of the Indian Service to systematize Papago seasonal wage work, to protect the Papago wage worker, to obtain for him the best possible working conditions and to train and guide him in his work according to need."

Such a Papago Labor Service could function most effectively for the economic welfare of Papago farm workers by training them to perform skilled tasks on the highly mechanized soil-robbing operations of Southern Arizona. Tractor drivers are usually in demand in the irrigated valleys. Skilled cotton picking machine operators will be more and more in short supply as the number of machines in use rises. A Papago Labor Service could probably contract with farm equipment distributors or farmers to train Papagos selected on an aptitude basis for such jobs.

Southern Arizona farmers look to the Arizona State Employment Service for such skilled farm workers. Although they distrust ASES-recruited pickers who are likely to be unskilled urbanites, they have found skilled laborers placed by the ASES are really skilled. Adequately trained Papago machine operators could be placed through the ASES in the course of its normal operations, without effort by a Papago Labor Service beyond training.

There is a place ready-made for skilled Papagos on farms where Indians have been employed previously. A typical reaction of a farmer experienced with Indian labor is, "If they live on the farm they consider it their home for a period. If you have other farm work to do, they'll pitch in."

A Papago Labor Service could concentrate on training unskilled Indians to do skilled work, and to speak better English in order to equip Papagos to compete more efficiently for farm jobs. If the tribe set out to conduct an energetic campaign to teach English, it could improve many employer-employee relationships which suffer from the Indian worker's lack of comprehension in a difficult language. Such a program would be most

¹Thompson, 1951, p. 81.

660 effective for adults if they learned individually, since one strong reason for lack of faster progress in learning English is a fear of being laughed at for making mistakes.

The Papago Council can assist the reduced number of unskilled Desert People who will be able to harvest cotton before frost kills leaves enough for picking machines to work efficiently. The Council might authorize the Papago Loan Board to grant loans to capable, responsible young Indians to purchase buses to haul Papagos to the fields from a town base, like the young man at San Xavier already mentioned. Indian contractors would necessarily have to weed out their crews to include the swiftest pickers who harvest clean, high-grading cotton preferred by growers. They would need to know the cotton growing areas intimately so they could move their crews where jobs were available. The Loan Board might well exercise some regulation over the housing these Indian contractors financed by the Tribe furnished their crews.

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466 The fact the Desert People live relatively near the Pima and Pinal county cotton fields will continue to operate to their advantage in a highly competitive labor market. Cotton farmers don't have to send to Texas or Oklahoma to hire them, and their transportation costs are only a fraction of those of most migrant workers. Their strong beliefs in St. Francis leading to prolonged absences from the fields, during the pre-frost hand picking seas; their lack of knowledge of English, and the stereotypes about Papago drinking habits some Papagos have caused most Anglos to hold will mitigate against the entire small hand picking force of the future being composed of the Desert People. But at this time, the Indians appear to occupy the most favorable position to obtain the small proportion of harvesting jobs which will remain in the cotton fields when the harvest reaches peak mechanization.

(M) Papagos and Yaquis will also be preferred by many cotton growers for the picking jobs remaining after full mechanization because they are isolated from the general labor market. They can be imported and exported as needed, much like foreign contract laborers. And the cultural conditioning of Indians gives them quite different characteristics as laborers from Mexicans or

¹Suggestions for school and adult education programs are made and discussed in Dobyns, et al, 1943, p. 65 et.

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Negros who have absorbed more Anglo-American culture and are therefore less subservient.

SKILLED FARM WORKERS

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The more skilled Papago farm laborers will be least affected by mechanization in the cotton fields. There is no foreseeable way of mechanizing the process of irrigation in the immediate future (although it could be done!), so demand for Papago irrigators will continue. And they are good irrigators when experienced. As one cotton grower remarked only half-jokingly, "The Papagos are the only people I know who can make water run uphill!"

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Another quality in the Desert People that makes them attractive to Anglo farmers is their pseudo-subservience. Employers say an Indian will never argue with you; he'll do a task your way, but if he doesn't like it he just leaves. Anglo farmers seem to prefer this kind of action to arguments and recriminations from workers of their own group, or Negroes or Mexican-Americans. It arises from the deepest wells of Papago personality. "In addition to belief in magical and supernatural forces, the main behavior requirements for smooth functioning of the Old Papago society were work, co-operation, and avoidance of aggression." These ideas drilled into the Papago child from infancy make the Papago adult a nearly ideal employee from the Anglo point of view.

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Advantages of behavior the Desert People have in finding farm jobs in southern Arizona are somewhat offset by their relatively poor understanding and command of the English language, and the high incidence of drunkenness among the men. However, the most serious disadvantage the Desert People will labor under when cotton cultivation and harvesting reaches full mechanization will be lack of skills.

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Of course, irrigators and general farm handy men who clean ditches, feed cattle or poultry, mend fences, and perform simple tasks on hay balers and other machines will still be hired. But their pay will be relatively low compared to tractor operators, especially machine picker drivers, and other skilled men. Papago farm workers have little opportunity to learn these skills, and mechanization may sweep the cotton fields leaving them all performing lowlier tasks.

¹Joseph, Spicer and Chesky, 1949, p. 211.